

Fishing

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226 Near rivers, swamps, and lakes, fishing is one of the principal occupations of the native.

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[246] Unlike hunting which is practiced only by men, fishing is done by both men and women. The latter, however, practice it only occasionally and fish only by damming up part of a river bed or marsh. The dam is usually built during the rainy season, but as long as the water is rising, the women leave all the sluices wide open. Toward the end of the rainy season, they narrow the drain channels and set large traps before the openings. These traps are attached to strong wooden stakes on the shore near the dam.
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226 The traps are made of splints from the ribs of raffia leaves and
285 are plaited in openwork with the open spaces varying in size. The exterior form is always the same. Cylindrical at one end [85] and the other end closed along the diameter, the trap resembles a large cone ending in a line at the top. These traps



Fig. 52. Making a Fish Trap among the Wadia and Tumba.

are built over a framework made of two, three, or four hoops. Their diameters vary according to their positions. They are set inside the trap, the largest one at the base, the smallest one toward the upper end. The transverse elements, doubled and woven alternately in and out, are spaced 10 to 15 centimeters apart and are usually made of strips of rattan. The inner trap, or entry trap, is plaited in the shape of a broad fan, conical

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- 226 chikwangu [Ed., manioc cake] or an earthworm is fastened to the hook, and everything is thrown into the water. Under the pressure of the current, the lines are drawn out and lie parallel to each other, held at one end by the large rope stretched over the water. A fish, attracted by the bait, seizes it and swallows it along with the hook, which remains in the stomach. All its efforts to free itself merely hooks the fish more securely. The native inspects the rope four

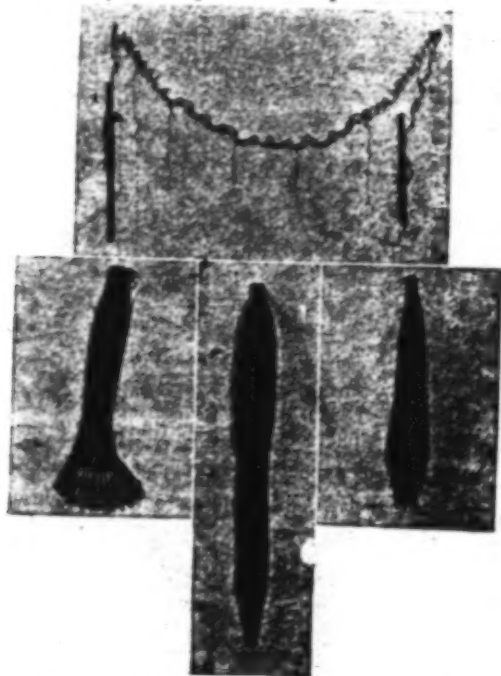


Fig. 54: Fish Traps and Lines, Lake Leopold II.

or five times during the day and pulls in the lines one by one. The hooked fish is cut loose by severing the string from the hook; it is gutted and thrown into the canoe. [90] The hook is replaced with one held in reserve until the first one is recovered while cleaning the catch.

The native also fishes with a line on the bottom and an inert line without a float. The hook is larger and usually made of iron. The strong rope is coated with oil to make